

SENATE—Friday, June 8, 2001

The Senate met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. BYRD].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Sovereign Lord of history, guide the vital page in history that will be written today. As we begin this new day, we declare our dependence and interdependence. We confess with humility that we are totally dependent on You, dear God. We could not breathe a breath, think a thought, or exercise dynamic leadership without Your constant and consistent blessing. We praise You for the gifts of intellect, education, and experience. All You have done in us has been in preparation for what You want to do through us now.

And yet, we know we could not achieve the excellence You desire without the tireless efforts of others. We thank You for our families and friends, the faithful and loyal staffs that make it possible for the Senators to function so effectively, and for all who make the work of this Senate run smoothly. Help us express our gratitude by singing our appreciation for the unsung heroes and heroines who do ordinary tasks with extraordinary diligence. We praise You for the gift of life and for those who make work a joy. In the name of Him who taught us the greatness of being servant leaders. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The acting majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we are not going to conduct business today. We have a schedule on Monday. There will be two votes at 5:15. We have the Landrieu amendment, which will be debated at 3 o'clock, and the Bond amendment will be at 2:30. We will have votes on those at 5:15.

SENATOR BYRD, A TRUE SENATE LEGEND

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I want to take this opportunity—because we

have been so busy in the last couple of days—to talk about one of the great honors I have had in my career. That took place right down here when I had the opportunity to administer the oath of office to ROBERT C. BYRD as President pro tempore of the Senate of the United States.

Mr. President, I am a historian. I have written a history book, and I love to read history. I just finished reading a book about Seabiscuit, the great racehorse. I love history. I have no doubt I was part of history in administering the oath to the President pro tempore of the Senate today.

We have a lot of athletic contests where people keep minute records of home runs—when they were hit, how many were hit in a month, and all such things. I have followed baseball, but I certainly don't go to games anymore. They take up too much time. But I have played in a few and I have watched a few in my day. I know a lot about baseball records. I know of those who have left a permanent mark upon baseball.

I also understand the Senate and the history of it. I understand that those people who come to visit like to meet Senators. I can remember coming here in 1974, and out in the waiting room I was able to visit with Hubert Humphrey. He was very ill at the time. He could not stand for a long period of time. He sat down in the reception area, and I had the pleasure of visiting with him. He was a friend of my wife's uncle, a pharmacist in Minneapolis. It was a great honor to meet him. He is a legislative legend, and I will never forget the experience of meeting him.

I serve in the Senate with who I believe is the Babe Ruth of the Senate. If there is a Babe Ruth in baseball, there is one in the Senate. The No. 1 player in the history of baseball is Babe Ruth. That is to whom everybody looks. I really believe, without any exaggeration, without any hesitation, the Babe Ruth of the Senate is the President pro tempore ROBERT C. BYRD.

I have had the opportunity to serve with Senator BYRD, which to me is something I will always treasure. If you research the life of Senator BYRD, you will find he has a remarkable history. Senator BYRD's mother died in the influenza epidemic in 1918. I have heard Senator BYRD tell various bits and pieces and parts of his history, some of which I remember as if he had said it a minute ago—about waiting on the tracks for his father—he was orphaned, so it was his adoptive father—to bring home a lunch bucket with things in it for his son.

Senator BYRD, like me, knows what it is to have a father coming home out of the mines. My dad used to say, "I had a rough day at the office," and he was covered with mud and grime. His office was down in the bowels of the Earth. So I have some comprehension of how Senator BYRD was raised. I understand how Senator BYRD didn't have money to go to college. Yet he graduated from college here in Washington, DC. He graduated law school while he was a Member of Congress. It is hard to comprehend.

The history books will have to be filled with Senator BYRD, whose achievements are unparalleled. He became a member, as I understand it, of the Democratic Senate leadership in 1967 when he was selected to be secretary of the conference. In 1971 he became the whip, the assistant leader. In 1977 he was elected Democratic leader, a position he held for six consecutive terms. For these 12 years as Democratic leader, he served as both majority and minority leaders.

To me, Senator ROBERT C. BYRD will always be Mr. Chairman. As a freshman Senator, I had the opportunity to serve on the Appropriations Committee. To be elected to the Senate and to be able to serve on the Appropriations Committee and then to serve under ROBERT C. BYRD is a fulfillment of the legislative dream.

We in this Senate are very fortunate to have the wisdom and experience of this man. The people of the State of Nevada benefit every day from what the Senator from West Virginia does. It is not only the State of West Virginia that benefits from what he does but every State in the Union benefits from what the Senator from West Virginia does.

He is serving in his eighth consecutive term as a Senator, making him the only person in the history of the Republic to achieve this milestone.

His great rise from the bituminous coal fields of his hardscrabble youth is a tribute to America. It is a tribute to Senator BYRD, but it is also a tribute to America. In America, one does not have to be born into money, prestige; one does not have to have educated parents to become an educated man; one does not have to have parents who have fancy homes and houses to come to Washington and serve in the greatest legislative body in the history of the world.

I believe Senator BYRD is an American patriot, underscored and underlined, a dedicated servant to the people of West Virginia, and a Senate legend. I believe I speak for everyone in the